(c) In Government's appreciation, Pakistan does not have adequate technology base to indigenously develop on its own a surface to surface missile of 1500 km range. Intelligence reports suggest the possibility of the missile/ missile technology having been procured from a third country. The Chinese assistance to Pakistan in the supply of M-11 missiles and technical assistance in the development of indigenous missiles is well known. Expression of India's genuine security concerns should not come in the way of our efforts for building a frindly, cooperative, good neighbourly and mutually beneficial relationship with China. Both sides should be responsive to each other's concerns.

Reimbursement of Cost of Newspaper

1521. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have empowered various Heads of Departments to sanction reimbursement of cost of a minimum of one newspaper to its Gazetted Officers, subject to a maximum amount of Rs. 150 per month;

(b) whether it is also a fact that such reimbursement has not been sanctioned to the officers of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (Headquarters);

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(d) what action Government propose to take to sanction the said reimbursement?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Government have isssued guidelines for allowing reimbursement of expenditure incurred on the supply of newspapers to gazetted officers at their residences. These guidelines envisaged reimbursement of expenditure on one Indian newspaper to officers upto Director level, two newspapers to officers of Joint Secretary level and three newspapers to officers of Addl. Secretary level. No upper limit was set for officers of Secretary level.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) is a scientific organisation dedicatedly working for development of state-of-the-art defence systems. Therefore its scientists and engineers need to be well informed about latest development in scientific field. Such information is not available in news papers. The technical libraries have therefore been well stocked with latest books and technical/research journals to cater to this need. In addition, important extracts of newspapers are consolidated in the form of a booklet, "Daily Current Awareness Services" and forwarded to various officers of DRDO Headquarters and also displayed in various libraries.

In addition scientists have been permitted to become members of scientific and professional societies and the membership fee is being reimbursed by Government, subject to certain monetary ceilings.

Upgradation of Diu Airstrip

1522. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD. Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether IAF's plan to upgrade Diu Airstrip has been stalled;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) how will the western sector off-shore oil fields will be protected against any threat from the border?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) In the interest of national security it will not be desirable to disclose the details in this regard.